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Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP72-00337R000100190015-2

NRO & USAF REVIEWS COMPLETED

2 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing on New Soviet Bomber for Staff of
House Armed Services Committee

1. On 1 June 1970 [] of SF/A met with Messrs. 25X1
Russell Blandford and Frank Slatinshek, Chief Counsel and
Assistant Chief Counsel of the House Armed Services Commit-
tee, to discuss the new Soviet bomber. []
of OLC was present.

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2. The main question concerned apparent discrepancies
between USAF and CIA statements about the nature and status
of the new bomber. It was explained that there were no
differences in fact, and that there was agreement on the
general characteristics of this aircraft.

3. Mr. Slatinshek and other members of the committee
staff had recently been briefed by Mr. Raymond Schneider of
FTD. This briefing reflected the most recent FTD/USAF assess-
ment of performance, including a modest increase in estimated
range. CIA had not been previously informed of this revised
estimate. This was the main cause of the problem, as the com-
mittee staff had been given one set of figures in earlier
briefings by CIA, and then a different set by FTD. The re-
vised FTD estimate is expected to be formally accepted by
DIA, and OSI has indicated general concurrence. The new
performance figures should be used in future CIA publications
and briefings, pending further intelligence.

4. The FTD/USAF briefing also emphasized the interconti-
nental capability of the new bomber, whereas CIA briefings
and publications have acknowledged this capability without
"pushing" it. The revised performance estimate improves the
intercontinental potential of this aircraft, although aerial
refueling and the use of Arctic bases would still be required
to obtain good coverage of US targets. Future CIA briefings
should be careful to give adequate acknowledgement to the
intercontinental potential of this bomber.

5. Other differences in emphasis may also have con-
tributed to the impression of disagreement. For example, 25X1

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the FTD/USAF briefing appears to have included some reference to the existence of "at least" two prototypes, allowing the listener to conclude that there might well be three or more. FTD would agree, however, that there are probably two prototypes at this time.

6. It was apparent that Messrs. Blandford and Slatinshek were not well-informed on the data base concerning the new bomber. This undoubtedly contributed to the mistaken impression of a basic difference in intelligence assessments of the new bomber. The nature of the information available was briefly reviewed.

7. Possible mission profiles for the new bomber were briefly discussed. It was pointed out, for example, that the ability to make low altitude penetrations would be an asset, but that this would reduce range. It was also noted that the estimated capability of Mach 2 at high altitude--which seemed to concern Mr. Blandford--was not a likely profile, but rather an indirect result of the aircraft being designed for low altitude high speed penetrations. The estimated performance of the new bomber was related to that of existing types.

8. The question of the classification of the new bomber as a "heavy" or "medium" was raised. It was pointed out that it would be best to avoid using either term because of the connotations of "intercontinental" and "peripheral" missions. The new bomber falls in between the existing heavy and medium bombers, and could be used for missions currently performed by either class.

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Analyst
Strategic Attack Branch, SR/SF

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